Hurricane Preparation Tips and Checklist for Seniors

With the start of hurricane season upon us, older adults may be among the most vulnerable victims. That’s why Home Instead Senior Care, the international caregiving company with more than 800 locations in 15 countries, has issued a disaster safety preparation checklist to help prepare seniors for the possibility of natural disasters. A disaster like a hurricane can be deadly for some seniors because of physical and other limitations. That’s why the sooner the better for families to talk with their senior loved ones and begin preparing in advance for any kind of emergency that could threaten their health or safety.

__Tune in.__ Stay abreast of what’s going on through your local radio or television and emergency management office.

__Take stock.__ Decide what your senior can or can’t do in the event of a hurricane. Make a list of what would be needed in the event of a hurricane. For example, if your loved one is wheelchair-bound, determine an evacuation strategy ahead of time.

__Pets.__ Include pets in the evacuation strategy. There are a few special shelters that allow pets, learn which hotels in the area allow pets well in advance of needing them. Make sure pets are vaccinated and have up-to-date ID tags fastened to your pet’s collar. Carry a current photo of your pet and have a properly sized pet carrier.

__To go or to stay?__ When deciding to evacuate, older adults should go sooner rather than later. By waiting too long, they may be unable to leave if they require assistance.

__Make a plan.__ Schedule a family meeting to develop a plan of action. Include in your plan key people, such as neighbors, friends, relatives & professional caregivers – who
__More than one way out. ___Seniors should develop at least two escape routes: one to evacuate their home and one to evacuate their community. The local emergency management office can tell you escape routes out of the community.

__Meet up. ___Designate a place to meet relatives or key support network people outside the house, as well as a second location outside the neighborhood, such as a school or church. Practice the plan.

__Get up and "Go Kit". ___Have an easy to carry backpack including three days non-perishable food and water with an additional four days of food and water readily accessible at home. Have at least one gallon of bottle water per person per day. Refresh and replace your supplies as needed. And don’t forget the blanket, flashlight, portable radio, batteries and paper products such as toilet paper.

__Pack extras and copies. ___Have at least a one-month supply of medication on hand at all times. Make ready other important documents in a waterproof protector including copies of prescriptions, car title, registration and driver’s license, insurance documents and bank account numbers and checkbook. Also take extra eyeglasses and hearing-aid batteries. Label every piece of important equipment or personal item in case they are lost.

__Contact list. ___Compile a contact list and include people on senior’s support network as well as doctors and other important health-care professionals.

__If you can't be there. ___If you’re not living close by to help your loved one, enlist the help of family or friends, or contact a professional caregiving company.